



United States Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria, Public Affairs Section  
Plot 1075, Diplomatic Drive, Central Business District, Abuja  
Telephone: 09-461-4000. Website at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>

## PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

February 19, 2015

PR-005/2015

### United States Supports Safer Schools in the Northeast

**Abuja, Nigeria** – U.S. Ambassador James F. Entwistle, joined Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, in witnessing the transfer of a \$2 million donation by the U.S. government to support Nigeria's Safe Schools Initiative—a project aimed at meeting the education needs of thousands of children affected by the ongoing conflict in northeast Nigeria, specifically in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. Michael Harvey, Mission Director of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Nigeria, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Resident Coordinator, Daouda Toure, were signatories to the agreement. The UNDP will manage a multi-donor trust fund to support the Safe Schools Initiative.

School enrollment rates in northern Nigeria are already among the lowest in the country. Attacks by the terrorist organization Boko Haram and the abduction of school children have discouraged many families across northeast Nigeria from sending their daughters and sons to school. In response to these circumstances, the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, alongside the Nigerian Global Business Coalition for Education and private sector leaders at the 2014 World Economic Forum on Africa, launched the Safe Schools Initiative under the leadership of Minister Okonjo-Iweala.

“The U.S. government is proud to support this initiative. Nigeria's children who have been affected by the insurgency do not also need to see their hopes for education sacrificed,” said Ambassador Entwistle.

“Whether these children reside in camps established for the internally displaced populations or with host communities, a secure learning environment and a quality education for the children and their communities are essential,” added Mr. Harvey.

The Safe Schools Initiative will manage school-based interventions, such as the improvement or refurbishment of infrastructure and furnishings, provision of teaching and learning materials, community-based preventative planning, and

support for double-shift scheduling to accommodate more students. Activities under the initiative include increasing the resilience of affected communities and building the capacity of children, teachers, and parents to prevent, reduce, and cope with challenging situations that affect children's education. Other aspects include multi-level communication/advocacy efforts and special measures, such as transferring students from schools in "high-risk areas" to schools in safer areas.

Since 2001, USAID education programs in Nigeria have supported access to quality basic education for girls and boys through teacher training. USAID has also provided small matching-grants to communities, parent-teacher associations, and non-governmental organizations to rehabilitate schools and prioritize community needs. The programs target public schools, as well as integrated Islamiyyah and Quranic schools, which provide both secular and religious education.

For more information, contact [jkamara@usaid.gov](mailto:jkamara@usaid.gov)

# # #